and raw materials, semi-finished products, components and sub-systems required by Ordnance Factories and Defence PSUs are being procured from the private sector. In the quest for self-reliance, the private sector shall continue to be associated in defence production, with suitable changes in policy and procedures to suit emerging requirements.

Copter crash near Vaishno Devi

1177. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL:
SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the copter Chetak involved in a crash near Vaishno Devi in the first week of February 2001, killing five army personnel, was on an offcial sortie; if so, what are the details of the crash;

(b) whether Government have seen the contradictory reports in the Press suggesting that the visit of a top ranking army offical with his escort entourage to Vaishno Devi shrine was of a personal nature; and

(c) whether Government have taken disciplinary action or conducted any probe into the matter and if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. The Chetak helicopter which crashed near Vaishno Devi shrine on 30th January, 2001, was on an authorised official sortie ordered by HQ Northern command to undertake the mission in support of Army Commander's visit to an operational location within his area of jurisdiction.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A court of Inquiry to investigate all aspects of the accidents has been ordered and its findings are awaited.

Recruitment in Defence Forces From Tamil Nadu

1178. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to raise additional recruits in Defence Forces from Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the recruitments from there is less in comparison to other States;